

Air Force going live with E-Exams

By Carl Bergquist
Air University Public Affairs

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala.(AETCNS)- Whether at home or in the field, the answer will come sooner when it comes to taking an Air Force examination.

By January 2005, the Air Force Institute for Advanced Distributed Learning at Gunter Annex here will fully implement the E-Exam computer-based testing program which will provide a variety of military tests via computers.

“The Air Force developed E-Exam for either stand-alone or networked computers,” said Steve McCarver, E-Exam program manager at AFIADL. “While any type of test can be administered through the program, Career Development Courses and professional military education, such as Senior NCO Academy, Squadron Officer College and Air Command and Staff College, will probably benefit the most from it.”

The system is highly secure and will ultimately eliminate the time-consuming process of mailing testing material and results back and forth between student and test facility, Mr. McCarver said.

Currently, getting a test to a student can take up to two weeks, depending upon the student’s location. Once completed, tests have to be mailed back to test facilities to be scored. The student must then wait weeks for results to be received in the mail. With E-Exam, students receive results of examinations immediately after completing the tests.

There are 767 test control facilities around the world, and each facility will benefit from the new testing program, said Roy Kinney, the chief of AFIADL Course Development Branch A. “E-Exam mirrors the paper-based testing system presently in use,” he said. “Right now, we are administering more than 18,000 tests each month. Through E-Exam, we will be able to give the tests on computers, which is important to military members who are trying to move on with their education but are being held up until they receive test results.”

The program also benefits members who may have ordered testing material shortly before a deployment. The material might not reach them in time and may be slow in catching up to them through the mail.



The program was beta-tested this year at Maxwell/Gunter; Kessler AFB, Miss.; and Robins AFB, Ga., said Robert Carrigan, vice program manager for E-Exam.

“The test control facilities loved the program and couldn’t wait to get the system in full swing,” he said. “The E-Exam PME areas touch both officer and enlisted members.”

The original program was developed in 1998 as the certification and testing program for the Air Force Civil Engineering Support Agency and was used for special certification testing for civil engineer personnel and firefighters.

Many members at AFIADL and in the Air University community provided assistance and support in developing the original version and the expanded Air Force-wide version of the system, Mr. McCarver said.

The E-Exam program shifted into high gear in 2003 after Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, acted on feedback from deployed Airmen who asked if there was an easier way to continue or complete their education while deployed.

“Our response to the general was that there was an easier and better way to do this, and that’s when the program took a new direction to encompass all Air Force testing,” Mr. McCarver said.



Following the release of the program to the beta-testers, the feedback was “very positive,” he said, especially among Guard and Reserve members.

Now, more than 70 percent of all Air Force bases are equipped to handle E-Exam testing. The task was a formidable one as more than 1,600 paper tests had to be converted to E-Exams, Mr. McCarver said.

The E-Exam team was able to reduce the number of tests to about 1,000 after deleting obsolete exams and those that didn’t meet their objectives, Mr. Carrigan said.

Another concern for the team was ensuring the testing system was compatible with other systems, such as Air University’s Course Development Student Administration and Registrar. In the end, however, the system has “worked out well,” Mr. Carrigan said.

Mr. Kinney said while E-Exam is unique to the Air Force, the other services are starting to take notice. He predicts it will be a hit with all military members.

“You’ve never seen such big smiles on the faces of students who have received their test results instantly,” Mr. Carrigan said. “Many times, students can’t move forward with their studies until they get their test scores, and being able to see those results so quickly really helps them out.”

For more information on E-Exam, visit the AFIADL Web site at www.maxwell.af.mil/au/afiadl.